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ABSTRACT

Because of the great diversity and decentralization of higher education, there exist a great variety of governance systems. These systems range on a continuum from systems with no effective participatory decision-making to systems totally committed to faculty-defined goals and objectives through the use of collective bargaining. The key to developing an optimal system of governance lies in the development of operational principles or philosophies that for mutual self-interest bind the diverse constituencies of the college together. This paper recommends that the boards of trustees should reasonably and specifically set fourth expectations that both faculty and administrators will be measured against, including: (1) faculty preparation and currency in their disciplines; (2) ongoing evaluation of faculty and administrators; (3) faculty participation in nonclassroom activities; (4) the establishment of an academic forum to promote the discussion of governance problems. This should lead to a productive coalition of faculty and administrators targeted on academic and institutional concerns. (Author/NHM)

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MORTAR BOARDS OR HARD HATS - WHO GOVERNS?

The theme, "Mortar Boards or Hard Hats - Who Governs?" suggests that academic governance philosophies may be conveniently delineated to the extremes of professionalism and trade unionism. This neatness of categorizing people or philosophies was probably more appropriate to a medieval logician than to contemporary reasoning. To the medievalist, truth was discernible by stating a proposition or thesis and its opposite or antithesis and then proceeding to argue to an ultimate truth.

Although the logic may be fallacious, there still may be a value in identifying the above extremes of faculty philosophy and style and from there, to attempt to clarify the implications of these positions to the governance of today's colleges and hopefully gain some insight into the dynamics of academic decision-making.

The more classical, if not romantic view, of a faculty member is that of a totally committed, non-organizational minded, semi-monastic individual, content with the mores and customs of the academic world -- a member of a community of scholars. In a word, faculty was an almost indistinguishable part of an organic unit called a college or university.

Whether such an individual or academic governance model existed in the past is subject to doubt. But nevertheless, the "Mr. Chips" syndrome of faculty was perhaps what others hoped existed in the character and makeup of those who ministered to the intellectual and moral needs of youth.

Closer to the fact, however, is that faculty members were not center-stage, or even in the wings, of decision-making in the very early

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Remarks by Dr. Karl J. Jacobs, President, Rock Valley College, Rockford, IL to ICCTA Workshop on Collective Bargaining at Hyatt Regency, O'Hare, on January 9/10, 1976.

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American college. Boards of control reigned omnipotent over colleges. The extent of board control even extended to dictating personal lifestyle of faculty members. In a word, board decision-making was exclusive and final.

Through a long and evolutionary process, however, the legal and political focus of decision-making over colleges has been delegated first to the presidents and then to the faculty. Today, governance of colleges and universities is a complex system of customs, rules, and practices shared and interrelated among boards of control, faculty, and administrators. This mutual involvement of collegiate groups in the governing process is often described as the "shared governance model."

Although enormous legal responsibilities rest with the boards of trustees, others within the institution propose and implement major policies within the sanctions of the legally constituted boards. The philosophic basis for shared governance is that through institutional commitment, a community of scholars pursuing truth can, by consensus, arrive at solutions to problems. Assumed in the philosophy of shared governance is the subtle understanding that boards, presidents, faculty and students are predominant in their respective areas of self-interest.

Critics of shared governance argue that faculty involvement under shared governance is, at best, token in nature; that faculty is, in the last analysis, second-best in confrontations with boards and presidents.

Students of collegiate governance stress that many academic governments lack active faculty participation and are impotent, if not demoralized, political bodies for critical decision-making. Not all

agree, and in fact, they see dangers in the sharing of power through shared authority.

Dr. Fred Matthews, a Michigan community college trustee, believes "shared governance" is a term coined by the union and is designed to lead naive trustees down the "primrose path." Only when the laws provide for shared responsibility should shared governance be talked about, states Dr. Matthews.

If shared governance is -- and was in the past -- a form of institutional governance, organized militant faculty activism has placed a crippling burden on such a governance system to perform -- at least as many thought it should perform.

If the classical mortar board type of faculty member -- with his organic style of viewing his role in institutional governance -- is challenged as antiquated, what then is the other extreme of faculty attitude on governance?

Thus enters the hard hat or the other extreme of governance. The militant or activist faculty member has an unshakable faith in the collective wisdom of the faculty to unilaterally make most fundamental decisions affecting the institution. Pervasive is the belief that faculty goals -- because they are devised by faculty -- carry a collective good for students and the community.

Proponents of faculty power contend that legal equality with boards of control through aggressive faculty organization power is not only appropriate, but realistic, in the American contemporary politico-socio realities of -- as Harold Laswell wrote years ago -- "who gets what, how and when." Thus, to the faithful, the tactic of real politik is both rational and appropriate in American society.

The tactic is collective political power exercised primarily faculty ranks and applied against both administrators and boards. This, again, is the outcome of super-professionalism, or -- if some pleases -- trade unionism applied to the collegiate environment.

Within the private sector, the struggle for power between employer and employee with the state as an ultimate arbitrator tactic been accepted. But there are those who argue that there is a distinction between private enterprise and higher education. In the private or sector, the line between employer and employee is both legally and psychologically understood. Employers expect management to manage. In turn, employees have a relatively clear interpretation of what the role of the employee is within the organization. Within higher education, the functional distinction between employer and employee is less than clear and it consequently a troublesome concept.

Reviewed as far are the two extremes of faculty and institutional governance philosophies. The one theoretically calls for an organic integration of faculty members into the institutional figure while the other philosophy dictates a phalanx-like adherence to faculty-dictated goals and objectives through the use of collectivized power.

Within this framework of two extremes in attitudes of faculty political role, it may be appropriate to ask, "What is the state of institutional governance today? Is it caught in the strong currents of one philosophy or the other -- passivity or militancy?"

Sweeping wide generalizations, the speaker would argue that collegiate institutional governance is in a suspended period. No specific or prevailing systems or models of governance are prevalent. Paradoxically only because of the great diversification and decentralization of of higher education, there exists a multiplicity of governance systems.

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